



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

COOS BAY DISTRICT OFFICE

1300 AIRPORT LANE, NORTH BEND, OR 97459

Home page: www.or.blm.gov/coosbay E-mail: coos_bay@or.blm.gov
Telephone: (541) 756-0100 Toll Free: (888) 809-0839 Fax: (541) 751-4303



1792
EA OR125-98-01

Decision Documentation for “Burnt Leftovers CT” timber sale analyzed in the “Tioga Creek CTs” EA No. OR125-98-01

Background:

The “Burnt Leftovers CT” timber sale (OR120-05-01) is a portion of the “Tioga Creek CTs” Proposed Action analyzed in EA OR125-98-01 by the Umpqua Resource Area, Coos Bay District Bureau of Land Management, which concluded in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) dated June 28, 1999. The EA analyzed three action alternatives to thin approximately 779 acres of 35-50 year old timber in the General Forest Management Area (GFMA) and Riparian Reserve in T. 27 S., R. 9 W., Sections 10, 14, 15, 22 and 23 and 24, Willamette Meridian. Details of the timber sale plan and EA are available for public review at the Coos Bay District Office.

Management objectives are to:

1. Enhance the growth and vigor of the residual stand by removing and utilizing excess trees that would otherwise be lost to mortality due to the high density of the stand, and provide a higher standing live volume and larger trees for future management objectives.
2. Manage Riparian Reserve by thinning to release understory conifers, increase the growth rate of the residual trees, stimulate the growth of other desirable vegetation, and increase the natural regeneration of conifer and hardwood species.
3. Work towards the goals in the Tioga Creek Key Watershed established by the Transportation Management Objectives (TMO) by decommissioning problem roads or roads unneeded for continued resource management. At a minimum there would not be a net increase in roads.
4. Improve connectivity for late-successional dependent species between the main block of LSR #261 and its southeast end, and thereby increase the robustness of connectivity habitat between LSR #261 and LSR #259.
5. Redirect the trajectory of stands inside the Riparian Reserve so they will develop

characteristics beneficial for late-successional wildlife species, and thus provide refuge areas and re-colonization source areas for the adjacent Matrix lands for the long term.

6. Help provide regional employment and support the timber based economy by producing a predictable and sustainable level of timber sales.
7. Help fulfill the commercial thinning harvest commitment for the Coos Bay District in the GFMA.

Decision:

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action to commercially thin the remaining stands in the Tioga Creek sub-watershed that were analyzed in EA OR125-98-01 by offering “Burnt Leftovers CT” for sale.

Alternative 1 (the Proposed Action), including “Management Common to Action Alternatives” and “Design Features and Management Requirements” described in the EA OR125-98-01, are hereby adopted with the following changes:

In addition to “Burnt Leftovers CT,” two previous timber sales, “Beyers Way CT” and “Burnt Ridge CT,” were analyzed in the “Tioga Creek CTs” EA project. The tables below shows the EA estimates and the field verified project thinning acres and road work for the “Burnt Leftovers CT” timber sale and the two previous sales:

EA Estimates

| EA Project Area | Thinning Acres | New Road Construction miles | Road Renovation and Improvement miles | Road decommissioning miles |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Tioga Creek CTs | 779 | 1.0 | 6.6 | 2.0 |

Field Verified

| Timber Sale | Thinning Acres | New Road Construction miles | Road Renovation and Improvement miles | Road decommissioning miles |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Beyers Way CT | 235 | 0.00 | 4.08 | 0.43 |
| Burnt Ridge CT | 133 | 0.47 | 1.12 | 0.85 |
| Burnt Leftovers CT | 288 | 0.56 | 3.23 | 1.15 |
| Totals | 656 | 1.03 | 8.43 | 2.43 |

The EA Proposed Action to thin an estimated 779 acres has been field verified at 656 acres,

allowing some portion of the stands in the project area to develop on their own trajectory.

The Proposed Action to construct an estimated 1.0 miles of new road identified in the EA has been field verified at 1.03 miles.

The Proposed Action to renovate or improve an estimated 6.6 miles of road identified in the EA has been field verified at 8.43 miles.

The Proposed Action to decommission an estimated 2.0 miles of road identified in the EA has been field verified at 2.43 miles.

In addition the following three changes are hereby adopted:

Original Plan: The EA stated that the use of ground based cut-to-length mechanical harvester and forwarder was to be used from July 16 to the onset off the rainy season.

EA Addendum No. 1: Use of a harvester/processor and forwarder on the ground based harvest areas will not be permitted during saturated soil conditions. The operational period will generally be July 1 through October 31, but may be extended or shortened based on soil moisture as approved by the Authorized Officer. Operations would be suspended when slopes from 0-30 % reach a maximum soil moisture of 30%, or on slopes from 30-35% with maximum soil moisture of 25%.

Original Plan: Existing snags would be retained on the units, with the exception of those deemed to be safety hazards during logging. One snag per acre will be created by topping one conifer tree per acre 15" or greater dbh within the unit boundaries. The trees would be topped with a chain saw at 50 feet or just above the first green limb whichever is highest.

EA Addendum No. 2: This EA addendum only applies to the "Burnt Leftovers CT" timber sale which is a portion of the area analyzed in the EA for the "Tioga Creek CTs" thinning project. In lieu of topping one green tree per acre, 1 or more snow damaged trees, with a minimum of 15 inches dbh and a high probability of achieving snag status within 2-3 years would be reserved.

Original Plan: Coarse woody debris will be added to select streams (determined by IDT fisheries biologist) by the timber sale purchaser by felling a 15 inch minimum diameter tree per 100 feet of stream.

EA Addendum No. 3: This EA addendum only applies to the "Burnt Leftovers CT" timber sale. All damaged trees that fell into the stream, as a result of the December 2003 snow event, would be reserved for coarse wood.

The design features will be implemented as described in the *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan* and its *Record of Decision* (RMP) (BLM, May 1995), as supplemented and amended, which conforms with the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (Northwest Forest Plan) and its *Record of Decision* (ROD) (Interagency, 1994) as supplemented and amended.

Actions within this area will be consistent with the direction proposed in the *Record of Decision*

and Resource Management Plan for Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon, Coos Bay, Medford, and Roseburg Districts (USDI May 2004). From stand exam information and timber cruise data, no Port-Orford cedar is known to occur in or near the project area. There is no indication of Port-Orford cedar along any of the haul roads leading from the sale area.

Rationale:

The Proposed Action is an alternative that meets the intent of the ROD for the Northwest Forest Plan by promoting forest health in the short and long term through thinning an overly dense stand, reserving snags and coarse woody debris in the GFMA and Riparian Reserves. The project is also consistent with the Riparian Reserve Standards and Guidelines of the Northwest Forest Plan and the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, and will contribute to restoring the fifth-field watershed of the project area over the long-term. The proposed project is intended to implement a portion of specific management opportunities identified in the South Fork Coos Watershed Analysis (USDI BLM 2001). The decision is consistent with the ROD for the *Northwest Forest Plan and the Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement* and the *Record of Decision* as supplemented and amended.

The three addenda, included in the proposed alternatives also meet the project design criteria because of the following rationale:

Addendum 1: This addendum provides a measurable way to monitor soil moisture to avoid soil compaction during ground-based operations. Previously, operations were allowed during arbitrary dates and not actual on the ground conditions.

Addendum 2: Many trees were damaged in the sale area during the December 2003 snow event. These trees are or will soon become snags. The snags would continue to be retained within the units, with the exception of those deemed to be safety hazards during logging. The retention of an additional one or more damaged trees per acre would continue to meet the original plan design for snag creation.

Addendum 3: Many of these damaged trees fell into the streams that were to have trees cut by the timber sale purchaser for coarse woody debris. In lieu of falling trees into the designated streams, we have identified the existing coarse woody debris from the snow event in select streams as sufficient amounts to meet the original plan goal.

Consultation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was completed for the project acres in the Biological Opinion for the FY 1999-2000 Timber Sale Program (Ref: 1-7-98-F-320) and the Re-initiation of Consultation (Ref. 115-04-F-0178), where it was determined that this action would not likely adversely affect listed species or critical habitat. The proposed action would not contribute to the need to list any special status species either under the Endangered Species Act or the OR/WA Special Status Species Policy.

Consultation on listed fish species by the National Marine Fisheries Service was completed for this project. A letter of concurrence for the project was received from the NMFS on September 2, 1999 with a “may affect - not likely to adversely affect” determination. Based on analysis by the fisheries biologist for the project, the proposed action is below the threshold level that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat as defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Administrative Remedies:

In accordance with *Forest Management Regulations* at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this timber sale will not become effective or be subject to formal protest until the *Notice of Sale* is published "...in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located..." For this project, the *Notice of Sale* will be published in *The World* newspaper on September 30th and October 7th 2004.

Decision approved by:

Umpqua Field Office Manager

M. Elaine Raper ***M Elaine Raper*** Date: ***09/30/2004***